



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

MAYOR'S NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 3, MARCH–APRIL 2009

Dear Friends:

Welcome to the third edition of my newsletter. The year may be young, but the hectic pace of work has not slowed down for the people at City Hall. In fact, my staff in the Mayor's Office and I have ushered in 2009 with a flurry of activity. We continue to grapple with the economic downturn that has hit so many, and my office has been working with many residents who have lost jobs and housing, or who are grappling with financial difficulties. We have been working as diligently as possible to assist people, even as our resources have been reduced as compared to previous years. I have worked hard to be attentive to your concerns resulting from this difficult time, and to try to ease some of your burdens whenever possible. We *all* remain committed to providing the best constituent services possible, and to building bridges and forging partnerships with communities other than our own. 2009 has also been a time of transition, as Vice Mayor Brian Murphy has accepted a post with the Commonwealth, and has resigned from his seat on the City Council. We wish Brian the very best, and we also give a warm welcome to our newest City Councilor, Larry Ward. I look forward to working with Larry in the coming months, and to continuing to work hard for the people of Cambridge!

January 7: I spoke at the grand opening of the War Memorial Recreation Center at CRLS. During my remarks, I observed that the city not only employs high caliber teachers, the city now offered a state-of-the-art facility for our kids to play sports. I also made a link between exercise and intellectual pursuits by quoting President Kennedy who said "Physical Fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body – it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity."

January 12: I met with residents of Kinnard Street to discuss the resident complaints about rat infestation. It was a productive meeting, and I think we have laid the groundwork for reducing this problem.

January 17–19: I joined over 250 Mayors for the 77th Winter meeting of the US Conference of Mayor's. My colleagues and I talked about climate change and rising unemployment rates, among other things. The highlight of the conference was the release of a study commissioned by the US Conference of Mayor on how to spur economic growth in US cities titled "Main Street Economic Recovery Plan."

January 20: Like millions of US citizens, I was at the National Mall in the nation's capital to witness the inauguration of President Barack Obama as 44th President of the United States. Back in Cambridge, my staff opened the Mayor's Parlor for public viewing of the inauguration. This was one of several city-owned venues opened to the public for this momentous occasion.

January 26: I participated in a panel discussion on the Future of Progressive Politics organized by the University of Toronto. During my remarks, I noted that with the election of President Obama, the political climate was now conducive for progressive politics in ways that it was not



Cambridge Mayor E. Denise Simmons

before. I also noted that Cambridge will continue to work on progressive and innovative solutions to some of the problems facing our city, especially with regards to renewable energy, green jobs, and job retraining for residents laid off as a consequence of the economic crisis.

January 24: I announced the Mayor's Wellness Initiative. The initiative, which is a partnership between the Cambridge Public Health Department, Cambridge Chamber of Commerce and the Boston Sports Club, Central Square, will provide mini-grants of \$500.00 to fund wellness programs created by any group, organization, business, city Department, school. Or any organized entity with a participating leader who is over 18 years old. Last Day for grant application submission was February 13. I am happy to announce that 12 groups qualified for the award and will receive mini-grants from my office.

January 24: I spoke at the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast, which was organized by the Cambridge chapter of the NAACP. During my speech, I noted that the presidency of Barack Obama would not have been possible without the civil rights work practiced by Dr. King. He was truly an American giant, and his work shall reverberate through our country forever.

January 30: I participated in Cambridge Walk-Ride Day along with several members of my staff. The initiative, sponsored by the Harvard Square Business Association and Cambridge Green Streets, seeks to encourage Cambridge residents to use alternative means of transportation to commute to and from work. During my remarks, I announced the Mayor's "9 in '09 Walk/Ride Day Challenge." The initiative rewards those who walk or share a ride at least once a month. Participants will be issued a green passport, which they can get stamped in various locations around the city, including my office. At the end of the exercise, participants who have received 9 stamps or more on their green passports will be invited to a reception in my office. Walk-Ride Day serves the dual purpose of promoting health and wellness while reducing the emission of Carbon into the atmosphere, a win-win situation for our city, state, country and planet. I urge you to walk to work when possible, and to carpool if you must drive.

January 23: I attended the annual MMA conference. The annual gathering of municipal officials from across the Commonwealth took place at the Hynes Convention Center. The highlight of the conference was a speech delivered by Governor Patrick in which he outlined significant cuts in state assistance to local communities as a result of the economic crisis.

February 2: On February 2nd, I met with a representative of NStar to discuss an energy audit of City Hall. While the city has made great strides in outfitting city buildings with energy efficient technology, City Hall still lags behind other city-owned buildings in energy efficiency. An energy audit will highlight inefficiencies in City Hall's use of energy.

February 2: I chaired a meeting of the City Council during which the Department of Homeland Security's plan to install surveillance cameras in various locations in the city was debated. After an intense discussion of the plan in the council, and after hearing from many residents of Cambridge opposing the plan during the public comments section of the city council meeting, I think my colleagues and I did the right thing to oppose it. My heartfelt thanks go to all the residents of Cambridge who came to the meeting to express opposition to the cameras.

February 2 and 9: I sponsored musical performances in celebration of Black History Month in the Sullivan Chamber: The first performance took place in February 2 and featured master drummer Moussa Traore from Mali. The second performance, which took place on February 9, featured a performance by griot Balla Tounkara. Griots are common in West Africa, where they are also known as oral historians and storytellers.

February 6: I attended the opening of the new Police Headquarters on Sixth Street. The new 100,000 sq ft facility, named after City Manager Robert Healy, was both on budget and on time. During the dedication, I thanked Mr. Healy for his long and dedicated service to the city. I thanked the City Manager's family for sharing him with the city for all these years. Although I was one of those who wanted the Public Safety Building to stay in Central Square, I am happy that a dream long deferred has finally come to fruition.

February 9: The City Council and I voted in favor of allowing the zoning changes proposed by the Alexandria Real Estate Company to move this process forward. This paves the way for the construction of a 1.5 million-square-foot campus in East Cambridge, which shall eventually house a number of world-class biotechnology companies. Cambridge has built a world-renowned reputation as a hub of biotechnology, and this project shall allow us to remain competitive. To avoid such developments is to risk having these businesses flee Cambridge for greener pastures. The project promises to pump energy into our local economy — a piece of positive news in a time when there isn't enough good news to spread around!

There will be hundreds of quality construction jobs over the next decade, in addition to an estimated 3,000 permanent jobs once the buildings are completed. The people filling these jobs will need places to park, places to eat lunch and dinner, places to shop – and they will be spending much of their money in Cambridge. Additionally, we believe that these new buildings will yield between \$9 million – \$12 million in property taxes every year.

February 18: I spoke about the life and legacy of Prince Hall at Harvard University’s Holyoke Center. Titled “The History of Prince Hall and Early American Freemasonry,” the talk was organized by the Cambridge Historical Commission as part of Black History Month programming. During my talk, I noted that that Prince Hall was an early pioneer of civil rights in the US. Prince Hall was a property owner and a registered voter in Boston. He worked as an abolitionist and civil rights activist, fought for laws to protect free blacks in Massachusetts from kidnapping by slave traders, campaigned for schools for black children, and operated a school in his own home. Last year, the Cambridge City Council voted to name Prince Hall a founding father of the United States and also voted to have a sculpture in honor of Prince Hall to be placed in Cambridge Commons. A suitable site has been chosen for the sculpture and an artist has been selected.

February 21: I received an award during the 1st Annual Cantabrigian of Color Awards by the Elks Club in Cambridge. I was honored for my work on behalf of minority communities in Cambridge (and it was an honor to be recognized!).

February 21: I spoke at the unveiling ceremony of postage stamps in honor of civil rights pioneer Charles Hamilton Houston..The event was hosted by the Clifton Merriman Post Office in Central Square and the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute at Harvard, and took place in the Arrow Street Theater in Harvard Square. Charles Hamilton Houston was an architect of the legal strategy which led to desegregation of schools in 1954’s landmark Supreme Court case, *Brown vs. Board of Education*. I observed that although Charles Hamilton Houston did not live to see desegregation of public schools, his influence continued to be felt in the work of Justice Thurgood Marshall and the other black jurists whom he helped mentor.

February 24: I hosted the local clergy for breakfast in the Robert W. Healy Public Safety Building. In his remarks welcoming the clergy to the new building,

Commissioner Haas noted that the building was outfitted with the latest technology to allow the CPD to be effective in its work. During the breakfast, Deputy City Manager Rich Rossi spoke about the city’s efforts to deal with the economic crisis. The assembled clergy also heard from Lt. Leonard DiPietro of the CPD’s Family Service Unit and Sgt Pauline Carter-Wells of the Domestic Violence Unit. The assembled clergy were then given a tour of the Public Safety Building. The breakfast was also attended by Rep. Alice K. Wolf, the new Chair of the Joint Committee on Elderly Affairs in the Massachusetts Legislature.

February 25: The City Manager and I hosted the Massachusetts Municipal Association, A non-profit and non-partisan association of Massachusetts cities and towns, at the Robert W. Healy Public Safety Building. In my remarks welcoming over 40 Mayors and City Administrators to the monthly gathering, I noted that current economic conditions called for sacrifices as well as an innovative approach to problem solving.

February 25: Professor Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Chair of the Department of African and African American History at Harvard University gave a talk titled “The Obama Presidency and a Legacy of Change.” The event, which was sponsored by my office, was in celebration of Black History Month. Welcoming Professor Higginbotham to City Hall, I highlighted the contributions of African Americans in the founding of the United States, contributions that we should all celebrate all the time—not just during Black History Month. I also noted that Black History was *American* history.

February 27: I was given an award in recognition of my work on behalf of communities of color by masons of the Prince Hall Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star. The award ceremony took place at the Walter E. Reed Auditorium in Dorchester. I was unfortunately unable to attend the ceremony due to a family priority, but my Deputy Assistant, Rosaleah Brown, kindly accepted the award on my behalf.

February 30: The Mayor’s Sock Drive, an initiative that I launched to collect socks for donation to Cambridge homeless shelters, concluded on this day. The initiative, which was actively supported by local clergy, city residents, and city employees collected over 700 pairs of socks. My thanks to all those who donated socks.

March 2: I swore-in Councillor Lawrence Ward as a new Cambridge City Councillor. Councilor Ward was declared the winner of the vacancy recount held on February 24 to fill Councilor Brian Murphy’s seat. The public recount was held in the office of the Cambridge Election Commission in the presence of Cambridge Election Commissioners, other eligible candidates, and friends and family members of Mr. Ward.

March is **Women’s History Month**. The Mayor’s Office will be sponsoring the following events in celebration of Women’s History Month.

March 6: 7:30 A.M –9:30 A.M. Boston International Women’s Day Breakfast, **Paresky Conference Center, Simmons College**

March 16: 5:30 P.M –8:00 P.M, 344 Broadway, Cambridge, Second Floor Meeting Room: The Historical Commission will unveil a plaque in commemoration of the 1972 takeover of a Harvard-owned building at 888 Memorial Drive by women demanding that Harvard provide a Women’s Center for the community.

March 23: 5:00 P.M—5:20 P.M, Mayor’s Parlor, City Hall: Reception to honor the work of the Women’s Commission in developing community ownership of the Report on the Status of Women and Girls in Cambridge published in June 2008.

5:20 P.M—5:30 P.M: Special presentation to city council on the Women’s Data Workshop Preliminary Findings and Recommendations.

Also: My office is requesting residents of Cambridge who have been influenced by the women in their lives to submit a photo of these women with a caption on the role these women played in their lives. My staff plans to display these pictures at City Hall.

Other Events for the Month of March and April

March 5: Good Scout kick-off meeting, Mayor’s Parlor,

March 16—March 20: Mayor attends National League of Cities Conference in Washington DC.

March 24: Clergy Breakfast, Kennedy Long-Fellow School.

March 25: 5:30 P.M—7:30 P.M State of the City Address, Sullivan Chambers, Cambridge City Hall

March 26: 30th Anniversary celebration of Emerge Boston, Cambridge Boat Club.

March 28: 10:00 A.M to 2:30 P.M Senior Town Hall meeting at Senior Center, 806 Mass Ave

March 27: 4:30 P.M—6:30 P.M Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, 41 Second Street, Cambridge(SWAN Day) Support Women Artists Now Day.

April 6: 4:00 P.M—5:30 P.M, Mayor’s Parlor, Cambridge City Hall: Reception for National Public Health Week.

April 15: Bridgewater State College: Keynote address, Rainbow Luncheon.

April 27 to May 5: Cambridge Science Festival. Visit the city’s website to find out about events for the Cambridge Science Festival.

To send me your thoughts, please detach below the bold line, insert in an envelop, and mail to MAYOR’S OFFICE, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA, 02139. I hold walk-in office hours most Fridays from 8:30 A.M to 9:30 A.M. Please call 617-349-4321 to find out when the next walk-in office hours will take place.

Name_____

Address_____ **Email**_____

Comment_____
